

water facts

No. 3

Adjudicated Groundwater Basins in California

The State of California is not authorized by the California Water code to manage groundwater. In some basins, the amount of water that can be extracted under that correlative right has been defined by a court. In other basins, each landowner's correlative right has not been defined. In these basins, groundwater may be managed by agencies that obtain their authority from the Water Code, or there may be little or no management. Some such ordinances at implementing groundwater management plans is untested. Whatever management plan is adopted by an agency, the groundwater rights of overlying landowners must be considered.

Landowners or other parties overlying some groundwater basins in California have turned to the courts to settle disputes over how much groundwater can rightfully be extracted by each landowner. The litigants pay for court-directed studies using the available data, to arrive at an equitable distribution of the groundwater that is available each year.

This court-directed process can be lengthy and costly, although some of these cases have been resolved with a court-approved negotiated settlement, called a stipulated judgment. Unlike overlying and non-overlying right to groundwater, such

decisions guarantee each party to the decision a proportionate share of the groundwater that is available each year. This Water Facts explains groundwater management by adjudication and lists the adjudicated basins.

In the court decision, the court appoints a Watermaster to oversee the court judgment and specifies how much each of the parties to the decision can extract. The basin boundaries are defined by the court and sometimes do not include an entire basin as defined in Department of Water Resources Bulletin 118, California's Groundwater. Puente Narrows is an addendum to the Main San Gabriel Basin adjudication that requires a minimum underflow from Puente basin to Main San Gabriel Basin of 588 acre-feet per year. The Santa Margarita Basin was adjudicated in federal court. That decision requires water users to report the amount of surface water and groundwater they use, but groundwater extraction is not restricted.

For most basins, the court has defined a fixed value for the safe yield. Extraction may exceed this value during some years as a part of the operating range that is allowed in the judgment. Adjudicated groundwater basins in California, their appointed Watermasters, the year the cases were filed, and the year the decision became final are shown in the table on pages 2 and 3. The court's name for the adjudicated portion of the basin is listed first, followed by the basin name used in DWR *Bulletin 118*.

Although adjudication of groundwater basins has resulted in a reduction of the amount of groundwater that is extracted, the total amount of water

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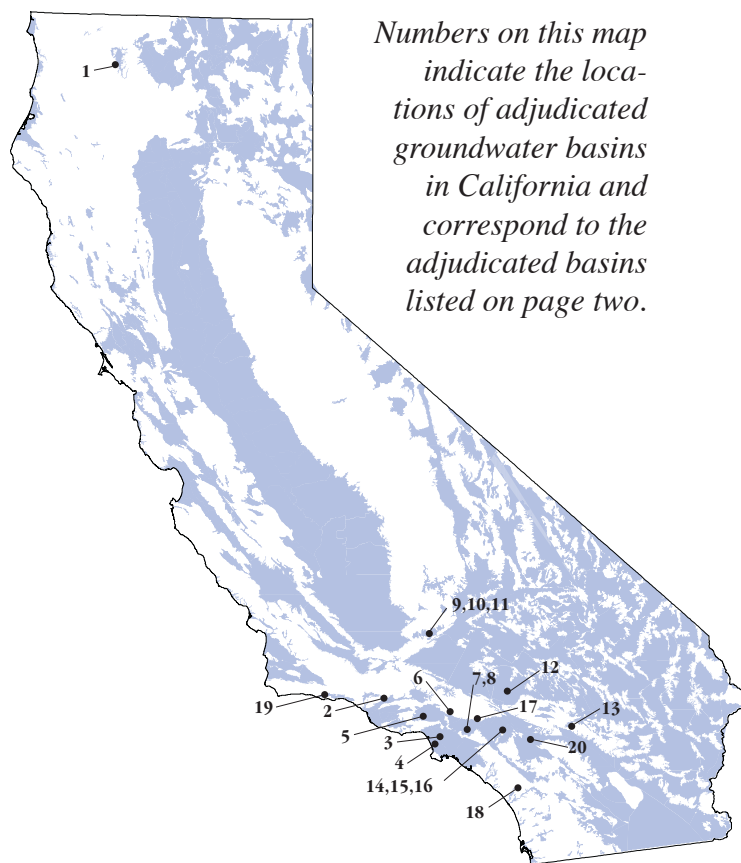
Adjudicated Groundwater Basins and Watermasters in California

	Court Name	Relationship to DWR Bulletin 118 Basin Name; County	Restrict Pumping	Filed in Court	Filed Decision
1	Scott River Stream System	Scott River Valley; Siskiyou (No. 1-5)		1970	1970
2	Santa Paula Basin	Santa Paula subbasin (No. 4-4.04) of the Santa Clara River basin (No. 4-4); Ventura	Yes	1991	1991
3	Central Basin	Northeast part of Coastal Plain of Los Angeles County Basin (No. 4-11.04); Los Angeles	No	1962	1962
4	West Coast Basin	Southwest part of Coastal Plain of Los Angeles County Basin (No. 4-11.04); Los Angeles	No	1946	1946
5	Upper Los Angeles River Area	San Fernando Valley Basin, entire watershed (No. 4-12); Los Angeles		1955	1955
6	Raymond Basin	Northwest part of San Gabriel Valley Basin (No. 4-23); Los Angeles	No	1937	1937
7	Main San Gabriel Basin Puente Narrows, Addendum to Main San Gabriel Basin decision	San Gabriel Valley Basin, excluding Raymond Basin (No. 4-13); Los Angeles	Yes	1968 1972	1968 1972
8	Puente Basin	San Gabriel Valley Basin, excluding Raymond Basin (No. 4-13); Los Angeles		1985	1985
9	Cummings Basin	Cummings Valley Basin (No. 5-27); Kern	Yes	1966	1966
10	Tehachapi Basin	Tehachapi Valley West Basin and Tehachapi Valley East Basin (No. 5-28, 6-45); Kern	Yes	1966	1966
11	Brite Basin	Brite Valley (No. 5-80); Kern	Yes	1966	1966
12	Mojave Basin Area Adjudication	Lower, Middle & Upper Mojave River Valley Basins (No. 6-40 - 6-43); El Mirage & Lucerne Valleys (No. 7-19); San Bernardino	No	1990	1990
13	Warren Valley Basin	Part of Warren Valley Basin (No. 7-12); San Bernardino	No	1976	1976
14	Chino Basin	Northwest part of Upper Santa Ana Valley Basin (No. 8-2); San Bernardino and Riverside	Yes	1975	1975
15	Cucamonga Basin	North central part of Upper Santa Ana Valley Basin (No. 8-2); San Bernardino		1958	1958
16	San Bernardino Basin Area	Northeast part of Upper Santa Ana Basin (No. 8-2); San Bernardino and Riverside		1963	1963
17	Six Basins	Six sub-basins in northwest upper Santa Ana Valley (No. 4-14, 8-2); Upper & Lower Claremont Heights, Canyon, Pomona, Live Oak & Ganesha; Los Angeles. Small portions of Upper Claremont Heights and Canyon are in San Bernardino County	Yes	1998	1998
18	Santa Margarita River Watershed	The Santa Margarita River watershed, including three groundwater basins: Santa Margarita Valley, Temecula Valley and Cahuilla Valley ¹ Basins (No. 9-4, 9-5, 9-6); San Diego and Riverside	No	1951	1951
19	Goleta	Goleta Central Basin, judgement includes North Basin (No. 3-16); Santa Barbara	No	1973	1973
20	Beaumont Basin	Parts of the San Timoteo Subbasin (No. 8-2.08) of the Upper Santa Ana Valley Groundwater Basin (No. 8-2), and the San Gorgonio Pass Subbasin (No. 7-21.04) of the Coachella Valley Groundwater Basin (No. 7-21)	No	2003	2003

**Final
Decision**

Watermaster & Web site*

80	Department of Water Resources
96	Three-person Technical Advisory Committee from United Water CD, City of Ventura, and Santa Paula Basin Pumpers Association www.unitedwater.org
65	DWR—Southern District www.dpla.water.ca.gov/sd/watermaster/watermaster.html
61	DWR—Southern District www.dpla.water.ca.gov/sd/watermaster/watermaster.html
79	Superior Court appointee
44	Raymond Basin Management Board
73 72	Water purveyors and water districts elect a nine-member board www.watermaster.org
85	Two consulting engineers
72	Tehachapi-Cummings County Water District www.tccwd.com/gwm.htm
73	Tehachapi-Cummings County Water District www.tccwd.com/gwm.htm
70	Tehachapi-Cummings County Water District www.tccwd.com/gwm.htm
96	Mojave Water Agency www.mojavewater.org/mwa700.htm
77	Hi-Desert Water District www.mojavewater.org
78	Nine people, recommended by producers and appointed by the court. www.cbwm.org
58	Adjudicated separately; watermaster appointed. Operated as part of Chino Basin.
69	One representative each from Western Municipal Water District of Riverside County & San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District; San Bernardino County
98	Nine-member board representing all parties to the judgement
66	U.S. District Court appointee
89	Goleta Water District
04	Directors of Public Work for the Cities of Banning and Beaumont, the General Managers of Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District, South Mesa Mutual Water Company, and Yucaipa Valley Water District



Numbers on this map indicate the locations of adjudicated groundwater basins in California and correspond to the adjudicated basins listed on page two.

¹In Bulletin 118-80, Cahuilla Valley (No. 9-6) is spelled differently.

*For more information on how to contact the watermasters, go to this Department of Water Resources web site:
http://www.groundwater.water.ca.gov/technical_assistance/gw_management/index.cfm#adbasins

consumed has continued to increase. As a result, agencies operating in many adjudicated basins have imported surface water or are looking for water to import to meet the increased demand.

The original court decisions provided Watermasters with the authority to regulate extraction of the quantity of groundwater; however, they omitted authority to regulate extraction to protect water quality or to prevent the spread of contaminants in the groundwater. Because water quantity and water quality are inseparable, Watermasters are recognizing that they must also manage for quality.

Adjudication of a ground water basin is one method of regulating groundwater extraction and allocating costs of replenishment. The Legislature has created nine groundwater management agencies that can pass ordinances to regulate groundwater extraction and has authorized some groundwater replenishment fees in 22 other types of water agencies. Three water districts have obtained statutory authority to regulate groundwater extraction. The authority can be found in the *California Water Code*.

Where do you get more information?

For more information contact any of the following California Department of Water Resources offices, or see our Web site: www.dwr.water.ca.gov.

Northern District

2440 Main Street
Red Bluff, CA 96080-2398
(530) 529-7300
www.dpla.water.ca.gov/nd

Central District

3251 S Street
Sacramento, CA 95816-7017
(916) 227-7590
www.dpla.water.ca.gov/cd

San Joaquin District

3374 East Shields Avenue
Fresno, CA 93726-6990
(559) 230-3300
www.dpla.water.ca.gov/sjd

Southern District

770 Fairmont Avenue, Suite 102
Glendale, CA 91203-1035
(818) 543-4600
www.dpla.water.ca.gov/sd

Division of Planning and Local Assistance

901 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-3515
(916) 651-9649
www.dpla.water.ca.gov

References

References for this Water Fact include the Watermasters listed in the chart on pages 2 and 3. For more information on how to contact the watermasters, go to this Department of Water Resources web site: http://www.groundwater.water.ca.gov/technical_assistance/gw_management/index.cfm#adbasins

